

ACHS SUMMARY FORM

M: 35-23

- Name Cabin John Hotel Gas House
- Planning Area/Site Number 35/23
3. MNCPPC Atlas Reference Map 20
G-13
4. Address MacArthur Blvd., Cabin John

5. Classification Summary

Category building
Ownership public
Public Acquisition _____
Status unoccupied
Accessible no
Present use Park
Previous Survey Recording M-NCPCC Federal _____ State _____ County X Local _____
Historic Sites Inventory 1976

6. Date 1880-1895

7. Original Owner Joseph & Rosa
Bobinger

8. Apparent Condition

a. goodc. original siteb. altered

Description: The gas house is a small, square brick building with an A-roof. The cornice, consisting of three courses of bricks projecting from the plane of the wall, is returned into the gable ends to suggest a pediment. The double doors, with diagonal boarding in a heavy frame, are framed below a segmentally arched opening of three courses of headers. The doors were widened early in the buildings existence; the brick arch reveals the first width of the entrance.

The gas house originally had a jointed tin roof. Each of the two windows on the west wall contained four separately opening sash windows, designed and installed for a more accurate regulation of the building ventilation.

10. **Significance:** The gas house is the only structure remaining of the Cabin John Hotel resort complex. A favorite watering hole of prominent Washingtonians, especially during the 20 year period between 1890 and 1910, the hotel was begun in 1873 and added to over the years. It burned to the ground in 1931.

The gas house was part of a group of outbuildings across the road from the hotel itself. Except for the gas house, all were of frame construction--stables, storage sheds, groom's quarters and an ice house. The gas house manufactured carbide gas, used primarily for illumination. Large drums of calcium carbide, brought in from Washington, were emptied into a hopper atop the gas-producing mechanism inside the building. The carbide then filtered down into a tank of water, and on contact with the water, generated carbide gas. This was piped across the road to the Hotel.

It is not known exactly when the gas house was constructed. However, an 1895 photograph of the front porch of the hotel shows gas lanterns establishing the use of the gas house by 1895.

11. Date researched and researcher Fall 1978 Mark Walston
Candy Reed - Architectural Description
12. Compiler Gail Rothrock 13. Date Compiled 12/78 14. Designation
Approval _____

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

M: 35/23

Magi #

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Cabin John Hotel Gas House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Mac Arthur Blvd.

CITY, TOWN

Cabin John

VICINITY OF

8
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Montgomery

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED☒ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☒ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☒ OTHER: Vacant**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Maryland-National Capital Park

Telephone #: 565-7401

STREET & NUMBER

and Planning Commission

CITY, TOWN

Silver Spring

VICINITY OF

STATE zip code
Maryland 20910**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Montgomery County Courthouse

Liber #: 562

Folio #: 354

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE
Maryland**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

MNCPPC Historic Sites Inventory

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☒ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

6700 Needwood Road

CITY, TOWN

Derwood

STATE
Maryland

7 DESCRIPTION

M:35.23

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The gas house is a small, square brick building with an A-roof. The cornice, consisting of three courses of bricks projecting from the plane of the wall, is returned into the gable ends to suggest a pediment. The double doors, with diagonal boarding in a heavy frame, are framed below a segmentally arched opening of three courses of headers.

The gas house originally had a jointed tin roof. Each of the two windows on the west wall contained four separately opening sash windows, designed and installed for a more accurate regulation of the building's ventilation. The front doors of the gas house were altered early in the building's existence. The work was performed by Will Austin, a local handyman, living near what is today Pyle Jr. High on Wilson Lane, who was hired with some frequency by the Bobingers. The entranceway on the main, or southern, facade of the building was widened by Austin, and the original doors were retained by adding pieces to the inner edges in order to service the enlarged opening. The first width of the entrance is evidenced by the brick arch over the doors, these doors being the originals incorporated by Austin to fit the extended passageway. Green was the primary color of the gas house woodwork. The hole in the south wall of the building was put in ca. 1920 by Harry Bobinger, to admit water pipes when the gas house was converted into a spring house.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1880-1895

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This small brick edifice, located on the grounds of the Cabin John Recreation Center is today the only structure remaining of the magnificent resort complex known as the Cabin John Hotel. The hotel, begun by Joseph and Rosa Bobinger in 1873, and expanded and elaborated upon over the years, enjoyed its greatest popularity during the last decade of the 19th and first decade of the 20th century, a period of gracious living commonly referred to as the "Gay Nineties". The Bobingers' establishment proved to be a favored "watering hole" of the period's best known Washington politicians, and featured such as popular entertainers as Ignace Paderewski and John Philip Sousa. The hotel burned to the ground in 1931.

The 9 3/4 acre parcel, north of the "Conduit Road", on which the gas house is situated, was purchased by Joseph and Rosa Bobinger from Thomas Dowling on January 22, 1880. (1) The subject building stood amidst a gathering of outbuildings across the road from the hotel itself. This grouping consisted of stables, storage sheds, groom's quarters, an ice house, and the gas house. All other structures were of frame construction. It is not known exactly when the gas house was erected. However, a photograph of the front porch of the hotel, dated October 14, 1895, shows in detail the mantles of the gas lanterns used to light up the porch, which exhibits the presence and performance of the gas house by the year 1895.

The gas house manufactured carbide gas, which was used primarily for illumination purposes. Large drums of calcium carbide, brought in from Washington, were emptied into a hopper atop the gas producing mechanism inside the building. The carbide then filtered down into a tank of water, and on contact with the water, generated carbide gas. This was piped under Mac Arthur Boulevard to the hotel across the road. The production of gas was often suspended during the colder winter days due to the freezing of the water. Every year the white residue produced by the mixture was flushed from the tanks, running down a constructed ditch to empty into the Cabin John Creek. The gas house ceased its operation with arrival of electricity.

NOTES

1. Deed EBP 21/258, Montgomery County Land Records

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Harry Bobinger, July 10, 1978
 Montgomery County Land Records

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Candy Reed - Architectural Description

Mark Walston

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Sugarloaf Regional Trails

Fall 1978

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Box 87, Stronghold

926-4510

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Dickerson

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO:

~~Maryland Historical Trust
 The Shaw House, State Circle
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401
 (301) 267-1438~~

SUGARLOAF REGIONAL TRAILS
 Box 87, Stronghold
 Dickerson, Md. 20753
 (301) 926-4510

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

1608704625

NOMINATION FORM
for the
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

1. NAME					
COMMON:					
AND/OR HISTORIC: Cabin John Hotel Gas House					
2. LOCATION					
STREET AND NUMBER: MacArthur Boulevard					
CITY OR TOWN: Cabin John					
STATE: Maryland			COUNTY: Montgomery		
3. CLASSIFICATION					
CATEGORY (Check One)		OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both		Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment		<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum		<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Storage</u> <u>Building</u>
Comments					
4. OWNER OF PROPERTY					
OWNER'S NAME: The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission					
STREET AND NUMBER: 8787 Georgia Avenue					
CITY OR TOWN: Silver Spring			STATE: Maryland		
5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION					
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Montgomery County Courthouse					
STREET AND NUMBER:					
CITY OR TOWN: Rockville			STATE: Maryland		
Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #):					
6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS					
TITLE OF SURVEY: None					
DATE OF SURVEY:					
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local					
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:					
STREET AND NUMBER:					
CITY OR TOWN:			STATE:		

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. DESCRIPTION	
CONDITION	(Check One) <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	<div>(Check One)</div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered
<div>(Check One)</div> <input type="checkbox"/> Moved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	
<p>The gas house is a small, square brick building with an A-roof. The cornice, consisting of three courses of bricks projecting from the plane of the wall, is returned into the gable ends to suggest a pediment. The double doors, with diagonal boarding in a heavy frame, are framed below a segmentally arched opening of three courses of headers.</p>	

8. SIGNIFICANCE**PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)**☐ Pre-Columbian☐ 16th Century☐ 18th Century☐ 20th Century☐ 15th Century☐ 17th Century☒ 19th Century**SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)****AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)**☐ Aboriginal☐ Education☐ Political☐ Urban Planning☐ Prehistoric☐ Engineering☐ Religion/Phi-☐ Other (Specify)☐ Historic☐ Industry

losophy

☐ Agriculture☐ Invention☐ Science☐ Architecture☐ Landscape☐ Sculpture☐ Art

Architecture

☐ Social/Human-☐ Commerce☐ Literature

itorian

☐ Communications☐ Military☐ Theater☐ Conservation☐ Music☐ Transportation**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

M:35-23

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

Acreage Justification:

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

Christopher Owens, Park Historian

ORGANIZATION

MNCPPC

DATE

10 Sept 74

STREET AND NUMBER:

8787 Georgia Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:

Silver Spring

STATE

Maryland

12.

State Liaison Officer Review: (Office Use Only)

Significance of this property is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Signature

PORTRAIT AND BIOGRAPHICAL RECORD.

767

University of Maryland. He immediately opened an office in Spencerville, Montgomery County, and gave his whole attention to his profession. In 1885 he removed to Dawsonville, and there continued the practice of the healing art, which he has not abandoned entirely, though of late years he has devoted himself chiefly to educational work. He is still called into consultation with his brother-physicians, who greatly value his opinion and experience. He is quite independent in his political ideas, and while he usually votes the Democratic ticket, he does not feel bound to the party. He is an associate editor of *Zion's Advocate*, published in Virginia, in the interests of the Baptist denomination. In 1880 the doctor was ordained a minister of the Baptist church, and at present has charge of four congregations, though he has never accepted a salary, and discharges these duties through genuine love for the work.

December 21, 1871, Dr. Waters married Ella O. Yates, daughter of Elder Paul W. Yates, a Baptist minister of Rappahannock, Va. The eldest child of this worthy couple, Alice May, a gifted and beautiful girl, died when about twenty years old. Their living children are as follows: Mary Lee, Paul Y., Charles L., Anna T., Lessie B., Lucy G., William C., Samuel D. and Eleanor. Mary is an associate teacher in the academy.



CABIN JOHN BRIDGE HOTEL. Near the bridge whose name it bears, this well-known hotel occupies a picturesque location, in Potomac District, Montgomery County, and seven miles from the city of Washington. It has recently been rebuilt and enlarged to twice its former capacity, and contains a number of dining rooms for parties, broad verandas affording a beautiful outlook, and a pavilion where every evening a fine orchestra furnishes music. A concert is also given every afternoon during the season. Every modern convenience is to be found

in the hotel—hot and cold water, electric bells, electric lights, electric fans, gas, steam heat and every accommodation for the convenience and comfort of the guests. It has been made a League hotel and special attention is paid to cyclists. Among the patrons, who drive or ride over from Washington, are celebrated members of congress, statesmen and diplomats. The hotel is conducted by the Bobinger Brothers. The elder of these, William H., was born in Montgomery County, February 2, 1863, a son of Joseph and Rosa Bobinger. He was educated in the local schools and from an early age was interested in the hotel established here by his father. His father died in May, 1881, and afterward he and his brother, George, assisted their mother in the business. On the latter's death, December 31, 1893, they succeeded to the management of the place. During the past eight years they have made constant improvements, investing large sums annually for this purpose. The hotel is surrounded with beautiful grounds, laid out by landscape gardeners, sloping down to the banks of the Potomac River, and here families visit and resort for many months of the year. This part of the noble river furnishes excellent fishing and the angler may rely upon excellent sport during the entire fishing season. The younger brother, George, was born November 9, 1865, and has spent his entire life here. Both brothers are interested in the work of the Presbyterian Church and the older one is a Mason, belonging to Montgomery Lodge No. 195, A. F. & A. M., at Rockville.

Cabin John bridge, from which the hotel takes its name, is the largest stone arch bridge in the world. It is built of granite, with a Seneca stone coping along the roadway. In length it measures four hundred and fifty feet; in height, one hundred and five feet. It cost \$250,000 and stands unsurpassed in the history of bridge building. The arch has a clear spring of two hundred and twenty feet and is twenty feet longer than the arch of the Grosvenor bridge, which spans the River Dee and is next in length. It is on the line of the conduit road, extending from the capital to the Great Falls of the Potomac, and

was built by the government, across Cabin John Creek, which rises at Rockville and flows into the Potomac a few hundred feet below the bridge. The erection of the bridge was commenced in the early part of 1857. From May, 1861, until July, 1862, active work on the bridge ceased by reason of the Civil war. December 5, 1863, water was turned into the conduit, but the bridge itself was not completed until 1864. The parapet walls were built in 1872-73, prior to which time there was only a log guard for protection. The engineer in charge of the aqueduct was Capt. Montgomery C. Meigs, United States corps of engineers.

The following inscription appears upon the tablet:

Washington Aqueduct.

Begun A.D. 1853. President of the United States,
Franklin Pierce.

Secretary of War, ———

Building A. D., 1861.

President of the U. S., Abraham Lincoln.

Secretary of War, Simon Cameron.

When the tablet was first put up the name of Jefferson Davis appeared as secretary of war, but this was afterward erased at the command of the secretary of the interior.

Cabin John, from whom the bridge and hotel take their name, was a picturesque character of early days. Little is known about him. His life was shrouded in mystery. He had no other name than that of Cabin John by which he was known to others. In his rude cabin he had no companions save fierce dogs. He passed his time in hunting and fishing, and clothed himself almost entirely from the skins of wild animals, and his principal food was their flesh. While his life was wild and lonely, he was cheerful and kind. As suddenly as he had appeared at his lonely home, he disappeared one day, no one knew whither. His dogs deserted their rocky kennel in the mountain side, his cabin crumbled and fell, and the only thing left to recall his memory was the creek that bore his name. During the days of slavery superstitious negroes claimed they often saw the ghost of the lonely man haunting the neighborhood of his de-

serted cabin. In 1825 the following verses were found under a grain-bin in an old mill on the the Cabin John Creek.

"John of the cabin,—a curious wight,
Sprang out of the river one dark stormy night;
He built a warm hut in a lonely retreat,
And lived many years upon fishes and meat.

"When the last lone raccoon on the creek he had slain,
It is said he jumped into the river again,
As no name to the creek by the ancients was given,
It was called Cabin John after John went to heaven."



WILLIAM THOMPSON, deceased, was born in Montreal, Canada. When he was very small his parents died; and when he was eleven years of age he and his brother went to Burlington, Vt., where their grandfather lived. There, near the blue waters of that beautiful lake, Champlain, they spent three years, then went to Washington, D. C. A few years later they started in the gas-fitting and plumbing business, in which they were very successful and made a fortune.

On retiring from business Mr. Thompson purchased a valuable homestead near Silver Spring. This property, which was formerly owned by the banker, George Riggs, contains seventy acres of choice land, embellished by an elegant residence attractively located in the center of the place, and containing fine forests, beautiful drives and lawns. After the war he settled here, where he resided until his death. For many years he was vice-president of the Metropolitan National Bank, of which his brother, John W., was the president for many years.

Near the beginning of the war Mr. Thompson married Miss Helen L. Nourse, daughter of John R. Nourse, who was born in Washington, D. C., and spent his active life as chief of a division in the treasury department. Politically he was a strong Republican and in religion was identified with the Presbyterian Church. He was a descendant of Joseph Nourse, who emigrated from



NAME BRICK GAS HOUSE FOR CABIN JOHN HOTEL

LOCATION CABIN JOHN REC. CTR. (M-NCPPC) McARTHUR BLVD.

FACADE SW CABIN JOHN, MD.

PHOTO TAKEN 9/10/74

#35-23

m. RUYER



#35-23

NAME BRICK GAS HOUSE FROM CABIN JOHN HOTEL

LOCATION C.S. REC. CENTER (M-NAPPC) MCARTHUR BLVD.,

FACADE SW

CABIN JOHN, MD.

PHOTO TAKEN 9/10/74

M. DWYER



NAME 7 HOUSE (BEING TORN DOWN) #35-23
LOCATION CABIN JOHN RES. CTR. (M-DEPPC) McARTHUR BLVD.,
FACADE SW CABIN JOHN, MD.
PHOTO TAKEN 9/10/74
M. DWYER